

ANointing THE SICK.

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It appears in several articles in the *EVANGELIST* since my article in No. 21 was published, that I was understood to be striking a blow at this divine ordinance. The caption of that article, "Does Not Believe God Heals," was substituted after I mailed the article, and from no other feature in said paper can such a conclusion be fairly drawn.

That Christ recognized a healing means of his day and sanctified it to the good of his church I willingly admit and faithfully practice but we should recognize the fact that he thus sanctified an almost universally recognized practice in the healing art of his day, anointing with oil, and thus gave sanction to medical treatment of the sick instead of denouncing it.

James v, 14, 15, reads, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." (Italics mine)

The medical profession recognizes a healing efficacy in the eternal use of oil in all diseased conditions having a dry, harsh skin, and it was much more universal in its use two thousand years ago when medicine as a science was in its infancy, and its indications were not so well understood, for want of a knowledge of the pathology of disease and physiology of life.

At that time disease was almost exclusively believed to be the direct effect of some sin committed by the patient or his parents, as is shown in John ix, 2, "Who did sin this man or his parents that he was born blind?" Jesus dispells this delusion by answering, "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents," yet by the pen of James he sanctifies the universally recognized means of healing then in use, anointing, when coupled with prayer and faith to the saving of the sick. Just what is meant here by saving the sick, and "The Lord shall

raise him up," and only what is meant is hard to determine.

The first might, with scriptural warrant of propriety, mean that this ordinance properly administered, and when spiritually entered into by the sick recipient, would be the means of his pardon—his salvation. And second, the being raised up by the Lord, might with equal propriety mean that he shall have part in the first resurrection as other saved persons. 1 Cor. xv, 23; Rev. xx, 6; 1 Thess. iv, 14-17.

Science teaches, and the Scriptures warrant it, that the anointing, the prayer and faith are all conducive to the restoration of physical health. An axiom with physicians, is that men often die for want of determination to live and confidence in the restorative means used, and often live against hope, in others, by dint of faith and determination to live.

With the former this hope inspiring ordinance is especially conducive of a physical resuscitation of the life forces, and this is the class of Christians most likely to call for the elders. The wisdom of God saw this condition in human nature long before man saw it, and wisely provided for the emergency in the ordinance of anointing, to stay such practical suicide.

Many who have received this ordinance have died soon after without more than a temporary relief. Shall we accuse the administrators or the patient of a want of faith? Or the Lord of a deficiency of power or purpose to fulfill all the promises of the Scriptures? Certainly not! Shall we believe and teach such absolute certainty of physical healing by this ordinance as to strengthen skepticism by its failures to heal all? Ah no!

I find another feature in this ordinance, surely. "And if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

I differ with some commentators, and assume that the sins here referred to are not such as in the minds of the ignorant of that day caused the sickness. Turn again to John ix, 3. "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." This plainly contradicts that superstitious notion.

What works of God are here refer-

red to? Not surely the healing as some commentators suppose. This man was not born blind simply that Jesus might have an opportunity to show his dominion over disease and deformity in a sin cursed race. Such opportunities were abundant.

It had long before been said, "For in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. ii, 17. But man's progenitor did eat thereof, and the works of God were manifest in the race ever after. For he drove him out of the garden and away from the tree of life "lest he should eat of its fruit and live forever," with his sin polluted body. "And he placed there at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." Gen. iii, 23, 24.

The perpetually reminding manifestations of these works of God was and is the evidence of mortality as seen in the deformities of human bodies, in sickness and in death, for by death alone is it possible to obtain a non sin cursed body.

Only by following the Lamb slain for you from the foundation of the world, (Rev. xiii, 8) through the regeneration, (Matt. xix, 28) to the restitution of all things, (Acts iii, 21) is this tree of life again made accessible to man. "Blessed are they that do his commandments that they may have right to the tree of life." Rev. xxii, 14. Here, and here alone, can all traces of mortality cease, and all the manifestations of God's works against man's sin-defiled body have an end.

"They that do his commandments," is the condition on which our race is restored to the tree of life lost to man by the first transgression. "As in Adam all die even so in Christ shall all be made alive," 1 Cor. xv, 22, means a bodily as well as a spiritual resurrection an incorruptible restitution.

How then do we get into Christ? "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ," etc. Rom. vi, 3. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Gal. iii, 27. How obtain the remission of sin and initiation into the kingdom of God save "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the